

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

5            1.    A fitting for retrofitting to a tracheostomy tube comprising:

             an inlet portion for attachment to an outlet structure of the tracheostomy tube; and

             an outlet portion for extending from the outlet  
10        structure of the tracheostomy tube, wherein the outlet portion is connected to the inlet portion, and wherein the outlet portion comprises at least one side opening.

             2.    The tracheostomy tube fitting of claim 1, wherein  
15        the outlet portion comprises a plurality of rows of side openings and a plurality of columns of side openings.

             3.    The tracheostomy tube fitting of claim 2, wherein  
20        each row is offset from an adjacent row and wherein each column is offset from an adjacent column.

             4.    The tracheostomy tube fitting of claim 1, further comprising a filter attached to the outlet portion for filtering air that enters the fitting through the at least one  
25        side opening.

             5.    A fitting for retrofitting to a tracheostomy tube comprising:

             a hollow cylinder having an inner diameter, an outer  
30        diameter, an inlet end opening and an outlet end opening, the cylinder further comprising:

             an inlet portion for attachment to an outlet structure of the tracheostomy tube, wherein the inlet portion comprises the inlet end opening; and

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an outlet portion for extending from the outlet structure of the tracheostomy tube, wherein the outlet portion is connected to the inlet portion, and wherein the outlet portion comprises the outlet end opening and at least one side opening that extends from the inner diameter to the outer diameter.

10        6. The tracheostomy tube fitting of claim 5, wherein the outlet portion comprises a plurality of rows of side openings that extend from the inner diameter to the outer diameter and a plurality of columns of side openings that extend from the inner diameter to the outer diameter.

15        7. The tracheostomy tube fitting of claim 6, wherein each row is offset from an adjacent row and wherein each column is offset from an adjacent column.

20        8. The tracheostomy tube fitting of claim 5, further comprising a filter attached to the outlet portion for filtering air that enters the fitting through the at least one side opening.

25        9. A tracheostomy tube comprising:  
an inlet structure for insertion into a patient's trachea; and  
an outlet structure for extending from an opening in the patient's neck, wherein the outlet structure is connected to the inlet structure, and wherein the outlet structure  
30 comprises at least one side opening.

10. The tracheostomy tube of claim 9, wherein the outlet structure comprises a plurality of rows of side openings and a  
35 plurality of columns of side openings.

11. The tracheostomy tube of claim 10, wherein each row  
is offset from an adjacent row and wherein each column is  
5 offset from an adjacent column.

12. The tracheostomy tube of claim 9, further comprising  
a filter attached to the outlet structure for filtering air  
that enters the tracheostomy tube through the at least one  
10 side opening.

13. A tracheostomy tube comprising:  
an inlet structure for insertion into a patient's  
trachea; and

15 an outlet structure for extending from an opening in  
the patient's neck, wherein the outlet structure is connected  
to the inlet structure, and wherein the outlet structure  
comprises an inner diameter, an outer diameter and at least  
one side opening that extends from the inner diameter to the  
20 outer diameter.

14. The tracheostomy tube of claim 13, wherein the  
outlet structure comprises a plurality of rows of side  
openings that extend from the inner diameter to the outer  
25 diameter and a plurality of columns of side openings that  
extend from the inner diameter to the outer diameter.

15. The tracheostomy tube of claim 14, wherein each row  
is offset from an adjacent row and wherein each column is  
30 offset from an adjacent column.

16. The tracheostomy tube of claim 13, further  
comprising a filter attached to the outlet structure for  
filtering air that enters the tracheostomy tube through the at  
35 least one side opening.

1       **52028/RVW/A789**

17. A method of modifying a tracheostomy tube that  
comprises an inlet structure for insertion into a patient's  
5 trachea and an outlet structure for extending from an opening  
in the patient's neck, the method comprising:

producing at least one side opening in the outlet  
structure of the tracheostomy tube.

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